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(which proposes and answers the question "What the West Might Learn") there is again expressed the same clear comparison and conviction (p. 475): "Doubtless the East has more to learn from us than we from the East. And certainly the best that it has to give we might have gained from our own Great Teacher, if we only would."

Thus while the book is not primarily missionary in its purport, it contains the most powerful missionary apologetic. It is a book which henceforth will be indispensable for the missionary to India as well as to the intelligent traveller and the general student of India and religion, for which classes it was chiefly intended. This learned and vivacious report of a keen observer, a careful student, and a warm friend will bring vividly again to the attention of the West a national situation than which there has been none more fascinating, accessible, elusive, rewarding, perilous, and magnificent in the history of India.

ROBERT E. HUME.

UNION THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY.

THE ENGLISH HYMN: ITS DEVELOPMENT AND USE IN WORSHIP. LOUIS F. BENSON. George H. Doran Co. 1915. Pp. 624. \$3.50.

The author of this book is well known to students of hymnody as the accomplished editor of the revised Presbyterian Hymnal of 1911, and as lecturer on Liturgics at Princeton Theological Seminary. Few men, either in England or America, are so well equipped to write a historical treatise on English hymnody as is Dr. Benson, and few have access to so extensive a collection of sources as he has built up for himself in his own collection of hymn-books. The volume which is here reviewed is by all odds the best available reference book covering the whole development of English hymnody, from the rise of psalmody about the middle of the sixteenth down to the opening years of the twentieth century. It does, indeed, stand quite by itself in its research into the sources of hymns, in its detailed outline of the historical development of the many branches of English hymnody, and in its breadth of treatment. Other studies covering the whole field have been far less thorough; or, if full and detailed, like the Introduction to the *Historical Edition of Hymns Ancient and Modern*, have been limited to a much narrower outlook. Dr. Benson has sought to cover the entire range of English hymnody, including within his view the hymns of such bodies as the Church of Latter Day Saints, as well as the outpourings of more conventional

religious organizations in both England and America. He has estimated their value with fair and unbiased discrimination.

The scholarly study of hymnology is a very recent development in the English-speaking world. German scholars did good work during the first half of the nineteenth century in the fields of German and Latin hymnody; but David Sedgwick, a second-hand book-seller in London who died in 1879 at the age of sixty-three, was apparently the first Englishman to collect hymn-books, and as late as 1850 or 1860 the careless ignorance of even those who undertook to edit hymnals was amazing. Students of hymnody have failed to realize until recently that out of old psalm- and hymn-books, dry and unattractive though they seem, the dominant religious ideals of the past can often best be reconstructed, and that in them, in church proceedings, and in the memoirs of hymn-writers, the development of the general tendencies of a nation's hymnody can alone be at all accurately traced. Dr. Benson has built his book out of these primary sources, and therefore speaks with a voice of authority much more commanding than that of most other writers on hymnody. The method is, indeed, the only sound basis for a scholarly reference-book such as this, but it must be said that it involves the sacrifice of some part of the human interest with which a good writer can invest the study of outstanding individual writers or groups of writers. The serious student will, however, be duly grateful for a volume which consists, not of guesses and gossip about hymns and their writers, but of trustworthy, first-hand information, skilfully used in tracing the development of English hymnody.

It is somewhat strange that we should have had to wait so long for such a work as this, for the English hymn has long offered an attractive field for research. Dr. Benson's comprehensive book, so far from exhausting the field, serves rather to suggest still further opportunities for investigation. Until very recent years there has been a tendency to slight both the literary value and the religious significance of psalmody and hymnody. The average hymnal has been compared with such collections as *The Golden Treasury*, greatly to the former's disadvantage. The critics have overlooked the fact that the basis of comparison was unsound. A hymnal is not a collection of poems to be read, but of songs to be sung by a company of people, and should be compared with collections of ballads, or of popular songs. Ballads have long been considered worthy of collection and study by scholars, but the psalms of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries—commonly modelled on the ballad meters—and the succeeding hymnody of the seventeenth

and eighteenth centuries, offer quite as rewarding a field of study. Hymnody is, in truth, a fruitful and engaging by-path of English literature, for if few hymns take high rank as poetry, a great many hymns do enrich and adorn the body of minor English verse. Indeed, it may safely be said that the English-speaking world could better dispense with all its other minor poets than with its hymn-writers.

The continued production of noble hymns by a church or a people is one of the surest signs of religious vitality. It indicates a fresh and living spirit which is outpouring itself in worship. That fact should give us good ground for hope in a renewal of the influence of religion in the English-speaking world. Dr. Benson, who carries his report down to 1914, points out some of the writers who have produced vigorous hymns in the last decade or two, hymns in which depth of thought and warmth of expression are combined with a far higher degree of literary skill and poetic instinct than was commonly the case in earlier days. He notes also the striking phenomenon of the great production of new hymn-books since 1900, both in England and America. Practically every denomination has revised, or is revising, its collection, and the new books almost uniformly mark a vast improvement over the old, in the quality and character of the hymns included and in catholicity of spirit. This phenomenon is, of course, simply the response of the churches to the spirit of the new day; their recognition that perhaps the truest expression of a people's deepest faith is to be found in the hymns they sing. It is a wholesome sign of spiritual growth when people find that the hymns of the fathers no longer fully express their own religious aspirations, and that they are moved to "sing unto the Lord a new song." *The English Hymn* will illuminate the path of the student and lover of hymns, and will make more easy the task of editors of future hymn-books. It has a carefully detailed table of contents and an ample index. There are a few misprints in the latter part of the book.

HENRY WILDER FOOTE.

HARVARD UNIVERSITY.